

The Light in the LIBRARY

By Kevin Stone

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THE LIGHT IN THE LIBRARY

By KEVIN STONE

CAST OF CHARACTERS (In Order of Appearance)

	<i># of lines</i>
MRS. HARDESTY librarian, keeper of the tomes	16
PAIGE lover of literature, adventure and mystery	185
GABBY Paige’s mischievous best friend; doesn’t read as much	139
GHOST of the library; sad and silent	n/a
JIM HAWKINS..... character from “Treasure Island”	70
ALICE of Wonderland	10
ANNE SHIRLEY of Green Gables	9
MAD HATTER..... of the famous tea party	14
RED RIDING HOOD on her way to see Granny	9
PETER PAN of the Lost Boys	22
WENDY DARLING..... friend of Peter Pan	7
HUMPTY DUMPTY..... sat on a wall	8
SNOW WHITE without the seven dwarves	4
ROMEO MONTAGUE without Juliet	9
EMPEROR..... without his regal outfit	4
LONG JOHN SILVER pirate from “Treasure Island”	16
MR. STEVENSON..... author of “Treasure Island”	22
PATRON* of the library	1

*PATRON can easily be played by the same actor who plays EMPEROR or ROMEO.



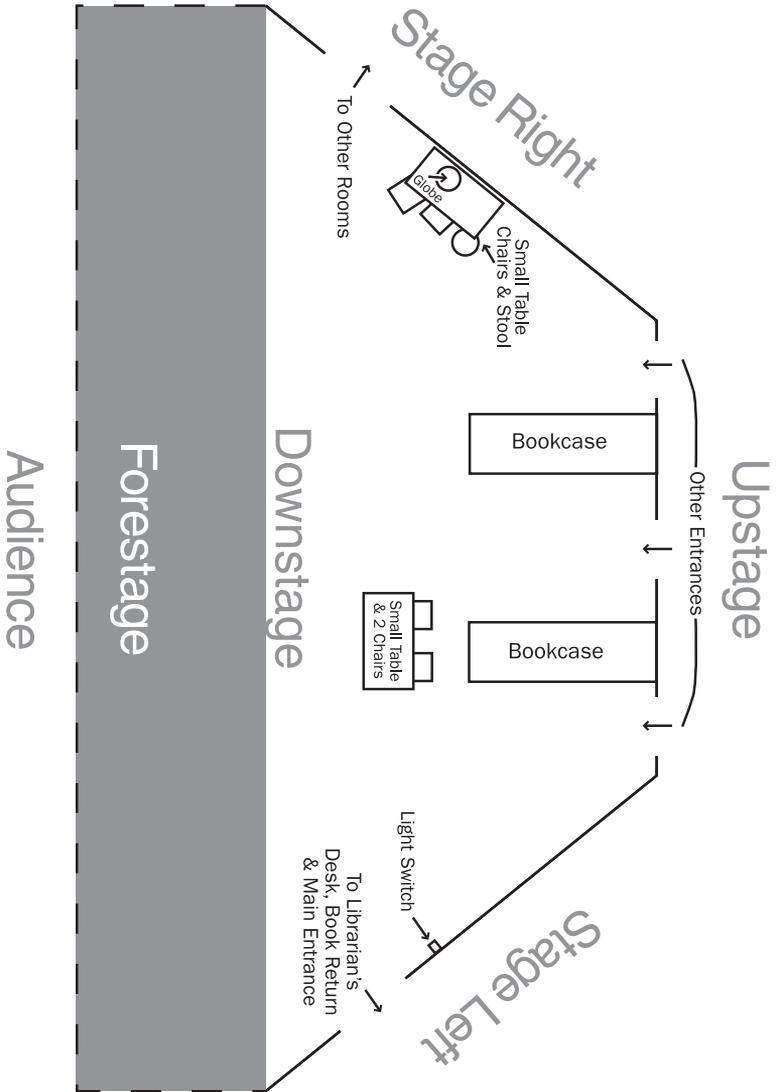
SETTING

TIME: Present day.

PLACE: The local public library.

The UPSTAGE wall is painted to resemble bookshelves standing lengthwise across the stage. There should be at least two tall bookcases with books positioned in front of the wall, perpendicular to the stage and facing each other in the manner of library stacks. There are five entrances: one DOWN RIGHT, leading to other rooms of the library; one DOWN LEFT, leading to the librarian's desk, the book return and the front entrance to the library; one UP RIGHT, in the wall at the end of a bookcase; one UP LEFT, in the wall at the end of a bookcase; and one UP CENTER, in the wall between the bookcases. Along the RIGHT wall are a globe sitting on a small table, a couple of chairs and a tall stool. A small table and two chairs sit LEFT CENTER. A light switch is on the wall by the DOWN LEFT entrance.

Set Design



THE LIGHT IN THE LIBRARY

Scene One

1 LIGHTS UP on the library interior. PAIGE sits at the table LEFT CENTER, taking notes from a book. A backpack is at her feet.

HARDESTY: (*ENTERS DOWN LEFT with a book and EXITS UP CENTER to shelve the book, then RE-ENTERS without the book.*) Not to rush

5 you, dear, but the library closes in five minutes.

PAIGE: Thanks. I'll start packing up. (*Gathers her papers and puts them in her backpack as HARDESTY EXITS DOWN LEFT.*)

GABBY: (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT, urgently.*) Paige! Paige!

PAIGE: (*Startled.*) Gabby?

10 **GABBY:** Shhh! (*Crosses to the table.*) What are you doing?

PAIGE: I was working on my book report. How's yours coming?

GABBY: It's coming. Listen, we've got to hide!

PAIGE: Hide? Why?

GABBY: Because— (*Quickly grabs the book off the table and opens it in front of her face, upside down. HARDESTY ENTERS DOWN LEFT with another book, EXITS UP CENTER, quickly RE-ENTERS without the book and EXITS DOWN LEFT again.*) Thanks for not blowing my cover!

15 **PAIGE:** (*Takes the book from her.*) Your "cover" was upside down.

20 **GABBY:** Look, the library's closing.

PAIGE: I know.

GABBY: We've gotta ditch the librarian because we've gotta stay here tonight!

PAIGE: (*Beat.*) Oh, no!

25 **GABBY:** Paige, I really, really need your help!

PAIGE: The last time you said that, I ended up with my mom's tuna casserole under my bed and I got grounded for two weeks!

GABBY: Yes, I'm still sorry about that, and I apologized to your uncle for his temporary baldness. But this is big! Huge! This is...

30 Smithsonian!

PAIGE: Huh?

GABBY: You know. It's historical and everything.

PAIGE: Oh, Smithsonian.

GABBY: (*Rises.*) I'm gonna hide! Pretend like you're leaving, then you hide, too!

35 **PAIGE:** Gabby—

- 1 **GABBY:** It's an adventure! You won't be sorry! *(EXITS DOWN RIGHT.)*
PAIGE: I'm already sorry.
HARDESTY: *(ENTERS DOWN LEFT, with more books.)* Anything to check out, Paige?
- 5 **PAIGE:** No, thanks. I'm just on my way out.
HARDESTY: Very well. You can just leave your book there. I'll reshelve it.
PAIGE: Thanks, Mrs. Hardesty.
HARDESTY: Good evening. *(EXITS UP LEFT.)*
- 10 **PAIGE:** OK, then. *(Loudly, for GABBY'S sake.)* Good night, Mrs. Hardesty! I'm leaving now! See you later! *(Leaves library book on table and picks up backpack.)*
HARDESTY: *(From OFFSTAGE.)* Yes, goodnight! *(As PAIGE starts to EXIT DOWN LEFT, GABBY rushes IN from DOWN RIGHT, grabs PAIGE and pulls her quickly OFF DOWN RIGHT. HARDESTY ENTERS UP LEFT, goes to table, gets the book and reads the cover.)* "Kidnapped."
15 *(EXITS UP CENTER with the book. While she is out of view, PAIGE ENTERS DOWN RIGHT again, but is immediately pulled back out of view. HARDESTY ENTERS UP CENTER and crosses DOWN CENTER, inclines her head to listen.)* Hello? Anyone here? We're closed!
20 *(Pauses. Moves DOWN LEFT. She flips the light switch, and the LIGHTS DIM, leaving a WIDE BEAM OF "MOONLIGHT" across the table and half the stage. EXITS DOWN LEFT. After a moment, SOUND EFFECT LEFT: DOOR CLOSING AND LATCHES. Pause.)*
- 25 **PAIGE:** *(Bursts ON DOWN RIGHT, with GABBY holding onto her arm. Wrenches herself free from GABBY'S hold.)* Gabrielle, have you completely lost your mind?!
- GABBY:** Not completely. I brought flashlights. *(Removes two flashlights from her pants pocket. Turns hers on and offers the other to*
30 *PAIGE.)*
- PAIGE:** *(Ignores the flashlight.)* This is crazy! I'm getting out of here! You can have your crazy library adventure by yourself! *(EXITS DOWN LEFT. SOUND EFFECT: RATTLING DOOR.)* Oh no! *(RE-ENTERS DOWN LEFT.)* The door is bolted shut!
- 35 **GABBY:** Yeah. Library's closed.
PAIGE: Argh! There's no way I'm spending the night here!
GABBY: I think we're stuck.
PAIGE: You're not stuck! You want to be here! I'm being held against my will, which is called kidnapping!
- 40 **GABBY:** Don't be such a drama queen.
PAIGE: Gabby, best friends do not kidnap each other!



- 1 **GABBY:** This is a special case. This is a real adventure!
- PAIGE:** I get my adventure out of books! It's called reading! You should try it sometime!
- 5 **GABBY:** You want books? You got books! I've given you a whole library-full! And I'm tellin' you, what you're gonna see tonight is wild beyond your imagination! It beats anything you'll ever read in these books!
- PAIGE:** That is an ignorant statement, bordering on illiteracy! Wait a minute! I have my cell phone! *(Pulls a phone out of her backpack.)*
- 10 I can call home. Or even the police or something!
- GABBY:** Paige, everything's taken care of! I talked to your mom today and asked if you could spend the night at my house!
- PAIGE:** You lied to my mother?
- GABBY:** I didn't lie. I just asked if you could. She said yes.
- 15 **PAIGE:** And your mom?
- GABBY:** She thinks I'm at your place! See? It's brilliant!
- PAIGE:** It's a catastrophe waiting to happen! *(Punches numbers into the phone.)*
- GABBY:** Paige, please, you haven't even seen it yet!
- 20 **PAIGE:** Seen what? Shadows?
- GABBY:** Just wait.
- PAIGE:** What's the matter with— *(Checks the phone.)* —no service? How can that be? *(Pockets the phone and sinks into a heap on the table.)* I am in so much trouble! My life as I know it is over.
- 25 **GABBY:** *(Checks her watch.)* It's about time.
- PAIGE:** Time for my life to end?
- GABBY:** Time for the adventure to start.
- PAIGE:** I don't know what's so adventurous about trespassing in a public library.
- 30 **GABBY:** Shh! Any moment now. *(Pause.)*
- PAIGE:** Oooh! Look! Dust settling on the books! Wow!
- GABBY:** Look! *(GHOST ENTERS UP CENTER carrying a lit candle. The GHOST seems to be looking for something. She examines the shelves with the candle.)* You see?
- 35 **PAIGE:** Shh!
- GABBY:** I don't think she can hear us.
- PAIGE:** What's she doing?
- GABBY:** I think she lost a book. *(GHOST moves DOWN CENTER, crying.)*
- 40 **PAIGE:** Look, she's crying!

- 1 **GABBY:** Yeah.
PAIGE: Why?
GABBY: She's sad. (*GHOST EXITS UP RIGHT.*)
PAIGE: (*Pause.*) Was that real?
- 5 **GABBY:** You saw her. And that means I wasn't going crazy.
PAIGE: You've... you've seen her before?
GABBY: Through the window. I was walking by the library last night and saw a light. I peeked in and saw her. Nearly freaked me out.
PAIGE: What's she looking for?
- 10 **GABBY:** Shh! (*GHOST ENTERS UP RIGHT, looks around the room once more.*)
PAIGE: I thought you said she can't hear us.
GABBY: I could be wrong. (*GHOST EXITS UP LEFT.*)
PAIGE: (*Takes her flashlight with determination.*) First thing, we need
15 to find this book. Or whatever it is!
GABBY: So you don't want to escape anymore?
PAIGE: Are you kidding? This is more than adventure, it's mystery! "The Mystery of the Haunted Library!" I've always wanted to be Nancy Drew. (*Begins to search a shelf.*)
- 20 **GABBY:** Okay, Nancy.
PAIGE: Did you see how she was dressed? Definitely not from around here, unless it was a hundred years ago. Check that shelf. (*GABBY searches another shelf. GHOST ENTERS UP LEFT, unseen, with a large old book.*)
- 25 **GABBY:** What exactly am I looking for again?
PAIGE: I don't know. Something a ghost would read. (*GHOST places the book on the table and EXITS UP RIGHT.*)
PAIGE: I'm not seeing a thing— (*Turns and sees the book on the table.*) —except that! Gabby! (*GABBY turns.*) On the table! That
30 book wasn't there before!
GABBY: (*Moves to the table.*) Look how old it is!
PAIGE: (*Moves to the table.*) Let's do some reading. (*Opens the book. SOUND EFFECT UPSTAGE: SHARP NOISE. Both girls swing their flashlights in that direction.*)
- 35 **PAIGE:** Did you hear something?
GABBY: Probably just normal, nighttime library noises.
PAIGE: Yeah. Or a ghost.
GABBY: (*Shines her light on the open book.*) It's not even a real book! Somebody cut a big chunk out of it!

1 **PAIGE:** The pages are cut away to make a hiding place... (*Lifts a piece of velvet from the book and unfolds it to reveal a magnifying glass.*)
...for this

GABBY: (*Pulls a piece of parchment from the book.*) Hey, there's a
5 note! (*Reads.*) "Dare disturb the dusty tombs.
The unreal walk the closed night,
Rising when the bound leaf glows
Bright in glassy lunar light." It's like a poem.

PAIGE: (*Takes the note.*) It is a poem. A quatrain. This word isn't
10 tombs, though. It's tomes. "Disturb the dusty tomes." And it's
closed, (*Pronounced "CLOZ-ed," with two syllables.*) not closed.

GABBY: What are tomes?

PAIGE: Books! Listen! (*Reads.*) "Dare disturb the dusty tomes.
15 The unreal walk the closed night,
Rising when the bound leaf glows
Bright in glassy lunar light."

GABBY: I don't get it.

PAIGE: Well, "disturb the dusty tomes." That must mean to open a
20 book. Maybe one that hasn't been opened in a while. Go get a
book!

GABBY: How do I know which ones haven't been opened in a while?

PAIGE: Check the classics.

GABBY: (*Unsure.*) Ok-aay.

PAIGE: Eight hundreds. Literature. (*GABBY grabs her flashlight and*
25 *EXITS warily, UP CENTER.*) And watch for ghosts!

GABBY: (*OFFSTAGE.*) I didn't need that!

PAIGE: (*To herself.*) "Lunar light." Moonlight!

GABBY: (*RE-ENTERS UP CENTER with a book.*) Here's a tome. Hope
it's dusty enough.

30 **PAIGE:** (*Takes the book.*) Ooh, good one. "Treasure Island." I'm doing
my book report on another one by the same author, Robert Louis
Stevenson.

GABBY: (*Picks up the note.*) How do we get a leaf? We can't go
outside.

35 **PAIGE:** Don't need to.

GABBY: What about the "bound leaf"?

PAIGE: Books are bound, and pages are sometimes called "leaves."
So, we open the book in the moonlight.

GABBY: Good thing there's a moon tonight. (*PAIGE sets the book on*
40 *the table and opens it.*) This second line: "The unreal walk the
closed night."

- 1 **PAIGE:** Pronounce it “closèd,” (“CLOZ-ed.”), but same thing.
GABBY: Not sure I understand “the unreal.” Not sure I want to.
PAIGE: Nothing’s happening. What I don’t get is, why the magnifying glass?
- 5 **GABBY:** To read the fine print?
PAIGE: Wait! Read the last line again.
GABBY: “Bright in glassy lunar light.”
PAIGE: Glassy moonlight!
GABBY: (*Looks up.*) There’s glass in the skylight.
- 10 **PAIGE:** Or “glass” as in magnifying glass! I bet that’s it! (*Picks up the magnifying glass.*) We focus the moonlight with this! (*She adjusts the position of the glass.*) See?
GABBY: A tiny dot of light.
PAIGE: I’ll move the dot onto a word. Let’s try a name.
- 15 **GABBY:** Whose?
PAIGE: Maybe that one... right... there! (*SOUND EFFECT: LOUD CRACKLING SOUND. COLORED LIGHTS FLASH. PAIGE drops the glass. They cower.*)
PAIGE: That did something!
- 20 **GABBY:** Okay, so what next, Nancy Drew?
PAIGE: Shh! I think someone else is in here!
GABBY: (*Moves UP RIGHT.*) You go that way. And I’ll go this way!
PAIGE: What if it’s another ghost?
GABBY: Then I hope you find it first.
- 25 **PAIGE:** Thanks. (*GABBY EXITS UP RIGHT while PAIGE EXITS UP LEFT. JIM HAWKINS ENTERS UP CENTER and takes in his surroundings. PAIGE and GABBY RE-ENTER. When they see JIM, both scream. This startles JIM, who yells. The GIRLS scream again. JIM yells more loudly. The GIRLS continue to scream. JIM covers his ears with his hands. Finally, the GIRLS see this and settle down.*) Where did you come from? (*Instead of answering, JIM backs RIGHT behind the table with the globe.*)
GABBY: Are you a ghost? How did you get here?
PAIGE: I think we’re scaring him. (*Lowers her flashlight.*) Listen, I’m Paige, and this is Gabrielle. (*To GABBY.*) Turn off your light. (*GABBY does.*) Are you Jim?
- 35 **JIM:** Yes, miss. Jim Hawkins.
PAIGE: (*To GABBY.*) That’s the name we focused on.
GABBY: In the book?
- 40 **PAIGE:** Yes!



- 1 **JIM:** I'm looking for Squire Trelawny. If you have seen him or Captain Smollet, I should very much like to speak with him. It is a matter of some urgency.
- PAIGE:** Neither the good squire nor the captain is available right
5 now.
- GABBY:** (*Amazed, whispers to PAIGE.*) You know this guy?
- JIM:** Or, since it seems I'm no longer at sea, if you could please give me directions to the inn named the Admiral Benbow.
- PAIGE:** I'm afraid we're a long way from there.
- 10 **JIM:** (*After a pause, to GABBY.*) To answer your questions, I am no ghost, and I have no idea how I got here. A moment ago, I was aboard the sailing vessel the Hispaniola. How I came to be here, I cannot say. Perhaps I am dreaming. Such a fantastical place!
- PAIGE:** I assure you, this place is real. It's a library, and we're your
15 friends.
- JIM:** I've seen no library such as this! Although there are books. But the sticks you hold... that bear the light?
- GABBY:** You mean these? (*Turns her flashlight on and points it at him; JIM covers his face with his hands.*)
- 20 **PAIGE:** Turn it off! It's an anachronism to him!
- GABBY:** (*Switches the flashlight off.*) An acro-what?
- PAIGE:** Anachronism. To him, it's out of context.
- GABBY:** Context. You mean, like, the setting of his story.
- PAIGE:** Yes, and since he's not in his story anymore, everything's
25 going to be out of context. (*The GIRLS approach JIM.*) We call these "flashlights." They produce light, stronger than candles and more focused than lanterns. Would you like to see one? (*Hands him the light. He inspects it.*) To produce the light, push the spot right underneath your thumb.
- 30 **JIM:** (*He does, turning on the light.*) Wonder of wonders! The doctor would be most intrigued! (*Begins to play with the light. CROSSES to where the table holding the book sits.*)
- GABBY:** (*To PAIGE.*) You know what I'm wondering?
- JIM:** (*Shines the light in his face.*) Ow!
- 35 **PAIGE:** If we should show him my cell phone?
- GABBY:** If it works on other books!
- JIM:** (*Turns the light on the book on the table.*) "Treasure Island." (*Picks it up and opens it.*)
- GABBY:** Maybe we should explain—
- 40 **JIM:** I know this map! This map is to Flint's treasure! Do you seek it, too? Why is it in this book?

- 1 **PAIGE:** We're not seeking the treasure. In fact, the treasure has already been found.
- JIM:** By whom? That means we're too late!
- PAIGE:** (To GABBY.) We took him from the middle of the book. He probably doesn't know how it ends. (To JIM.) Listen, I can't tell you everything, but you do defeat the pirates, and in doing so you learn discernment and the meaning of sacrifice. In short, you prove yourself a man.
- JIM:** If not a treasure seeker, you are indeed a prophetess.
- 10 **GABBY:** No, she just reads a lot.
- PAIGE:** I've read "Treasure Island." It's your book.
- JIM:** Mine?
- PAIGE:** It tells your story. In fact, you're the narrator—it's written from your perspective. We used your book to bring you here. From your world into ours.
- 15 **JIM:** (Sets the book down.) I never wrote a book.
- GABBY:** It's easier to show him. (Moves to the shelves.) It worked on "Treasure Island." Should work on something else! (EXITS UP RIGHT.)
- 20 **JIM:** You spoke of your world in contrast to mine. How can there be more than one world?
- PAIGE:** Well, there's the world of imagination, for example. And this world. That makes two.
- JIM:** But the world of imagination? That's not real.
- 25 **PAIGE:** That's technically correct. You're with us tonight because we found this note. (Reads.) "Dare disturb the dusty tomes.
The unreal walk the closed night,
Rising when the bound leaf glows
Bright in glassy lunar light."
- 30 **JIM:** What has that to do with me?
- PAIGE:** "The unreal walk the closed night." That's you.
- JIM:** But I am real. I have a mother. I live near Bristol.
- PAIGE:** I know. And you work in an inn called the Admiral Benbow. We don't think of you as "unreal," just... fiction. You're a "character."
- 35 That's what we call people in novels: characters of fiction.
- GABBY:** (ENTERS UP RIGHT with books, which she sets on the table.) Let's bring some characters to life! I got "Hans Christian Andersen," "Anne of Green Gables," "Stories of the Brothers Grimm" and more!
- 40 **PAIGE:** Good! (Picks up a book.) Except for this one!
- GABBY:** Moby Dick?

1 **PAIGE:** What happens if we bring a whale in here?
GABBY: A whale?
PAIGE: It would destroy the whole library!
GABBY: Moby Dick's about a whale?
5 **PAIGE:** You need to read more. (*Tosses the book aside.*)
GABBY: (*Picks a book out of the pile.*) Why read 'em when I can meet
'em? Let's start with Anne!
PAIGE: Set her on the table. Jim, this is how we do it. (*Picks up the
magnifying glass.*) We open the book and pick out a character's
10 name: Anne Shirley. We make sure it's in the moonlight, and then
we carefully focus the light... right on... the name! (*SOUND EFFECT:
LOUD CRACKLING SOUND. COLORED LIGHTS FLASH. BLACKOUT.*)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

LIGHTS UP; ANNE SHIRLEY and ALICE stand DOWN CENTER. HUMPTY
DUMPTY sits atop the tall stool, looking down his nose at the
15 proceedings.
ALICE: Curiouser and curiouser!
ANNE: At least we are surrounded by books! I simply adore books!
They give such scope to the imagination! Do you love books, too?
ALICE: I'm none too fond of my lessons, but I do like to read.
20 **ANNE:** Then we are very close to being kindred spirits! My very own
bosom friend! So, you have met the real Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-
dee?
ALICE: Yes, they are funny little men. And I have met the Cheshire
Cat and the Queen of Hearts, though I shouldn't like to meet her
25 again.
ANNE: Who I would like to meet, more than anyone, is the Lady of
Shallot!
ALICE: But isn't she a fictional character?
ANNE: That's no obstacle, if you have imagination! Let's play tag!
30 (*Touches ALICE.*) You're it! (*They begin chasing each other IN and
OUT and around the bookcases. MAD HATTER and RED RIDING
HOOD ENTER DOWN RIGHT, struggling for possession of RED'S
basket.*)
MAD HATTER: Goodies, you say?! That's the very thing we need for
35 our tea party, don't you know?
RED RIDING HOOD: But they're goodies for my grandmother. She's
sick, and I'm going to cheer her up.

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Scene One:

At least two tall bookcases with books, four chairs, tall stool, two small tables, globe.

BROUGHT ON, Scene One:

Pen, book, notebook, papers, backpack containing a cell phone (PAIGE)

Books (HARDESTY)

Two flashlights, copy of "Treasure Island," other books (GABBY)

Lit candle; large, old, hollowed-out book containing a magnifying glass wrapped in felt and a note (GHOST)

ONSTAGE: Scene Two:

Some books, magnifying glass

BROUGHT ON, Scene Two:

Basket of goodies (LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD)

Shadow [a piece of dark, diaphanous material] (WENDY)

Pocket watch (MAD HATTER)

Cell phone (PAIGE)

Apple (SNOW WHITE)

ONSTAGE: Scene Three:

Apple, large broken eggshell, magnifying glass, books (including "Treasure Island" with map page to be ripped out)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Three:

Cutlass, cart with computer monitors (SILVER)

ONSTAGE: Scene Four:

Piece of eggshell, "Treasure Island"

BROUGHT ON, Scene Four:

Newspaper (STEVENSON)

Books (HARDESTY)

Backpacks (PAIGE and GABBY)

SOUND EFFECTS

Door closing and latching, rattling door, a sharp noise, loud crackling sound, loud crash.

LIGHTING

Colored lights flashing to create effect when characters appear or disappear.

COSTUMES

The modern day characters dress in typical clothing with the added detail that GABBY wears camouflage cargo pants with as many pockets, straps and strings attached as possible. She also wears a wristwatch. MAD HATTER has a pocket watch. JIM should look like a seafaring young man of the 1700s: a white tunic, slacks with rolled up bottoms. The rest of the literary characters should have at least some representational costume piece to make them easily identifiable. EMPEROR should wear a crown and appear in underwear, though nothing immodest: very long, brightly colored boxer shorts and a t-shirt, a union suit with a flap in the back or long johns.

FLEXIBLE CASTING

PATRON, HARDESTY, HUMPTY DUMPTY and MAD HATTER can be either male or female. PATRON can easily be played by same actor who played EMPEROR or ROMEO.



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